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Viewing cable 09GUATEMALA538, ROGUE ELEMENTS OF GUATEMALAN MILITARY SELLING

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- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09GUATEMALA538	2009-06-08 22:35	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET	Embassy Guatemala

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/04/21/112616/drug-gangs-help-themselves-to.html>

VZCZCXYZ0009
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHGT #0538/01 1592235
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
R 082235Z JUN 09
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7597
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
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S E C R E T GUATEMALA 000538

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/07/2019
TAGS: [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MCAP](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [MOPS](#) [GT](#)
SUBJECT: ROGUE ELEMENTS OF GUATEMALAN MILITARY SELLING
WEAPONS TO NARCOS

REF: GUATEMALA 407

Classified By: Political Officer George Mathews for reasons 1.4 (b.d)

[¶1. \(S\) SUMMARY.](#) In the wake of a recent deadly shoot-out

between GOG anti-drug agents and Zetas, the embassy has received new information indicating rogue elements within the Guatemalan army are selling military-grade weapons and munitions to narcotraffickers. The Embassy DAO has learned that 12 junior officers were recently relieved by their commanders for suspicion of selling armaments under their control to drug organizations. The 12 officers have not been arrested, but were instead "sent home," while Guatemalan military intelligence (D2) continues its investigation. END SUMMARY.

¶12. (U) On April 24 agents from SAIA (Counternarcotics Analysis and Information Service) conducted a raid on a warehouse located 30 kilometers south of Guatemala City. The agents encountered a number of heavily-armed Zetas, the military arm of the Gulf Cartel, and the ensuing firefight left 5 SAIA agents dead. Following the raid, GOG authorities confiscated a large quantity of weapons, including: 11 light machine guns, a Light Anti-tank Weapon (LAW), 563 rocket-propelled grenades, 32 hand grenades, 8 Claymore anti-personnel mines, almost 8,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, and 3 fully armored Suburbans.

¶13. (S) NAS reports that senior officials in the Attorney General's office (MP) were receptive to allowing DAO and ATF personnel access to the weapons cache. As a result of this access, DIA analysts were able to determine with a high degree of confidence that many of these weapons and munitions came from Guatemalan military stocks. For example, the 3,812 rounds of 5.56mm ammunition, used by M-16s and other military-style assault weapons, were found sealed in packaging bearing the stamp of the Guatemalan military industrial facility (IMG.)

¶14. (S) Senior Guatemalan military leaders ordered D2 to initiate an investigation into the sources of the Zetas' weapons and munitions. In the course of their investigation, D2 determined that 12 junior military officers were likely involved in selling armaments to narcotraffickers. A number of the rocket-propelled grenades recovered following the April 24 shoot-out can be tied directly to weapons storage facilities under the control of these officers. However, none of the 12 officers have, at this point, been arrested for their involvement in these activities. (NOTE: As is standard practice in the Guatemalan military, these officers have not been prosecuted. Rather they have been relieved of their positions and sent home. In similar cases in the past, officers have not faced courts martial and were either allowed to retire or were quietly shifted to other assignments. Furthermore, there is a high level of distrust between D2 and civilian law enforcement agencies, which makes any prosecution in the civilian legal system unlikely. END NOTE)

¶15. (S) DAO reports that the senior leadership of the Guatemalan military has been fully supportive of efforts to determine if narcotraffickers are receiving weapons from Guatemalan military stocks. However, D2 has been much less supportive, claiming they are still investigating the matter. They also have been hesitant to reveal significant details, such as the names of the 12 officers, what units they are assigned to, or where they are stationed.

¶16. (S) On May 12, DAO spoke with Major General Abraham Valenzuela, the Guatemalan Minister of Defense, about the investigation. Valenzuela said he is very concerned about the matter and will ask President Colom to request that an outside agency, possibly the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) investigate. Valenzuela believes a small ring inside the Guatemala military is involved in the sale of arms to narcotraffickers. However, Valenzuela did not comment on the number of officers involved. He did say that he will do everything possible to see that the 12 officers implicated in the D2 investigation are prosecuted. He also offered to provide the names of the 12 officers to the embassy so they can be prohibited from being issued visas to the United States.

¶7. (S) COMMENT: The involvement of Guatemalan military officers in the sale of weapons to narcotraffickers raises serious concerns about the Guatemalan military's ability to secure its arms and ammunition. The National Police (PNC) are already outgunned by the narcotraffickers, and now have to go up against weapons from Guatemala's own military

stockpile. While we are currently only aware of this isolated case, we will press Ministry of Defense officials to review its procedures for securing weapons and ensure the problem is not widespread. The increased willingness of the Guatemalan military to punish corruption with vigorous prosecution would also send a strong message and preserve institutional integrity. To further this goal, the embassy will press the GOG to refer this case to CICIG, with the expectation that high-profile prosecutions could deter others in the Guatemalan military from cooperating with narcotraffickers.

Lindwall